

Experimental Biology and
Medicine Institute

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Dear Ed:

It was really very pleasant hearing from you because we had wondered many times how you folks were getting along and really hadn't had much to go on. I agree it would be fun to compare Sally's and Roger's merits, but we will have to include Tommy in the picture too. He's three months old now and a very pleasant little boy.

Your account of the set-up in Seattle certainly offers compelling reasons for making some change. I feel just as you do that these next few years are very precious for us and should be spent in the most optimal environment for intense work. I am inclined to agree with you that the pathology jobs are not entirely without hitches. It would seem that the best environment is in a department of biochemistry where there is a lot of stimulation and mutual assistance, and one has relatively less to gain at our stage as isolated specialists.

The Institute is in a state of very rapid change or, better, enlargement, and it is difficult to predict what its strong points and weak ones will be even a year from now, but I am rather hopeful that it will continue to be a very good place to work. The foundation of the giant new clinical center is already half built and the rest of this 50 million dollar building is well under way. It will be a hospital devoted completely to research and will have 500 beds with extra research facilities that will be several times as great as the present Institute. A rough comparison might be made with the Rockefeller Institute Hospital which has only 60 beds. I mention these things because you still seem to be interested in them, though for my part I regard it more as a potential threat rather than a possible benefit.

Our set-up now is awfully nice. We have six fair-sized laboratories and two large cold rooms, equipped as well as we want them, and a liberal budget for further equipment and assistance. I think you may recall meeting Bernie Horecker and Leon Heppel at Atlantic City. Bernie is well along in the isolation of TPN cytochrome reductase from liver and Leon is doing almost as well with the analogous DPN enzyme. We have a Fellow in organic chemistry, Schrecker, who has synthesized riboflavin phosphate and is now isolating the FAD synthesizing enzyme of yeast. It seems rather likely that Ohmeyer will come here from Germany for a 1 to 2-year Fellowship. Another possible addition is Seegmiller who worked with Barron and is completing his internship at Hopkins.

Financially, the Commissioned Corps is rather attractive. I now have the rank of Senior Surgeon which is comparable to Commander, and with recent extra pay allowances the annual pay runs somewhere near \$9,000. The two grades below this one are separated by something less than \$1,000 each. I have found absolutely no infringement on complete freedom to do just what I thought would be the most fun to do. Under a recent reorganization of the Institute, we constitute the Enzyme and Metabolism Section of the Laboratory of Biochemistry and Nutrition of the Experimental Biology and Medicine Institute. The other Institutes of the new National Institutes of Health are Dental, Mental Hygiene, Cancer, and Microbiology. I have detailed these because the plan is to have the Experimental Biology and Medicine Institute devoted to fundamental research with no restriction to any disease, as contrasted with the other Institutes. The only group doing biochemistry of the type that you would be interested in is Greenstein's in Cancer, and I don't think your ideas and plans would find the most suitable environment there. I don't know whether you would be interested in joining our group, and it is also a big question how our space situation is going to be. On the whole, I am very anxious for you to join the Health Service, both for your sake and that of the Service. But it is really desirable that you line up a rather specific assignment before going ahead with any application. Is it necessary that you reach some decision before the Detroit meeting? Perhaps it would be worth while for you to overshoot Detroit and drop in here at the Institute on your way there or back to look the place over. In any case, I will be thinking about the whole business, looking around for more information to talk over when we get together in Detroit. It would be nice though if you could make an extra effort to come here. We would really love to have you.

We now have some rather big names at the Institute, some for only temporary stays - Warburg, Szent-Györgyi, Houssey, Wyckoff, etc. It is really quite a joint! I would like to go on, but this is getting a little unwieldy and will have to save the juicier gossip for next time.

With fondest regards from Sylvie to you and Deedy,

Sincerely,

Arthur Kornberg.

AK:T